

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1-3, 7, 8, 11, and 14 as new rewritten claims 1-3, 7, 8, 11, and 14 as follows below. A marked up version of the amended claims to show the changes made is attached hereto.

1(Twice-amended). An IFN- γ production inducing agent which consists essentially of an effective ingredient capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells, said effective ingredient consisting of an interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, having the following physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8 \pm 1.0 on chromatofocusing;

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- γ production by immunocompetent cells; and

(4) Partial amino acid sequence

Possessing a part or the whole of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa in SEQ

ID NO:2 is Met or Thr.

2(Twice-amended). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and an effective ingredient capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells, said effective ingredient consisting of an interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, having the following physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8 \pm 1.0 on chromatofocusing;

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- γ production by immunocompetent cells; and

(4) Partial amino acid sequence

Possessing a part or the whole of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr.

3(Twice-amended). A purified interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein which is a variant of an interferon-gamma production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, having the following physicochemical properties:

(1) Molecular weight

19,000±5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);

(2) Isoelectric point (pI)

4.8 ± 1.0 on chromatofocusing;

(3) Biological activity

Inducing the interferon- γ production by immunocompetent cells; and

(4) Partial amino acid sequence

C² Possessing a part or the whole of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr, wherein said variant has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 with at least one amino acid residue in SEQ ID NO:2 replaced with different amino acid or at least one amino acid residue deleted or added to the N-terminus of SEQ ID NO:2 while not substantially altering the physicochemical properties of the protein.

~~/(Twice-amended). A purified interferon-gamma (IFN- γ)~~

C³ production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, where Xaa represents methionine or threonine.

c3
cont

8 (Twice-amended). An interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing agent which consists essentially of, as an effective ingredient, the protein of claim 7.

11 (Once-amended). A purified interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which has the following physicochemical properties:

- (1) Molecular weight
19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE);
- (2) Isoelectric point (pI)
4.8 \pm 1.0 on chromatofocusing;
- (3) Biological activity
Inducing the interferon- γ production by immunocompetent cells; and
- (4) Partial amino acid sequence
Possessing a part or the whole of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr,

c4

and which reacts with a monoclonal antibody specific to an interferon-gamma production inducing protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 or a variant of the protein having one or more antigenic fragments of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 and an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 with at

c4
cont least one amino acid residue in SEQ ID NO:2 replaced with a different amino acid, or at least one amino acid residue deleted or added to the N-terminus of SEQ ID NO:2, while not substantially altering the physicochemical properties of the protein.

c5 14(Once-amended). A purified interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein capable of inducing interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production by immunocompetent cells, wherein said protein is encoded by a DNA sequence which hybridizes to an oligonucleotide probe of SEQ ID NO:5 under the hybridization conditions of 5 x SSPE, 5 x Denhardt's solution, 0.5 w/v% SDS, 100 μ g/ml denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 45°C and after being washed with 6 x SSC.

Please cancel claims 12 and 13 without prejudice.
